UNITED NATIONS

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine
(Sixth African Regional Seminar)

2 - 6 April 1990

and

Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium
on the Question of Palestine

2 - 5 April 1990

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Theme: *"The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"*

90-25554

best copy available

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE (SIXTH AFRICAN REGIONAL SEMINAR)	2
II.	REPORT OF THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE	29

ANNEXES

I.	Message to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel adopted by the participants in the Seminar and NGO Symposium on 2 April 1990	40
II.	Message from the participants in the Seminar and the NGO Symposium to H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization	41
II.	Motion of thanks	42
IV.	List of participants and observers in the Seminar and the NGO Symposium	43

I

THE TWENTY-FIFTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE (SIXTH AFRICAN REGIONAL SEMINAR)

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE
2 - 6 APRIL 1990

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
Introduction		1- 3	3
A.	Opening statements	4-26	3
B.	Panel presentations	28-51	11
C.	Conclusions and recommendations ...	52-72	22

READEX FICHE

Introduction

1. The Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth African Regional Seminar) with the theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held jointly with the Third African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at the International Conference Center in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 2 to 6 April 1990, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Head of the delegation; Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone); H.E. Mr. Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan (India); H.E. Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); and Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Palestine). Mrs. Diallo was Chairman of the Seminar, Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo was Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur; Mr. Gharekhan, and Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko, served as Vice-Chairmen.

3. Seven meetings were held and 16 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 14 Governments, Palestine, 3 United Nations specialized agencies and organs, 2 intergovernmental organizations, 2 national liberation movements, as well as 17 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the Seminar.

A. Opening statements

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone

4. The opening ceremony of the Seminar and the NGO Symposium was addressed by the Hon. Alhaji Dr. Abdul Karim Koroma, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone. In the address, he welcomed the participants on behalf of the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Joseph Saidu Momoh, the Government and the people of Sierra Leone.

5. He pointed out that the Seminar aimed primarily at sensitizing the international community on the issue of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which had been a matter of concern to the international community for over four decades and that it engendered deep hostility and mistrust, produced a catalogue of injustices and led to military confrontation and conflict. The Seminar came at an appropriate moment in history, a moment of rapid and exciting changes in international relations. In Europe, the Eastern European socialist régimes, including the Soviet Union, were at the crossroads of tremendous change from Marxist political systems to plural political structures with liberal economies. Elsewhere in the world, profound changes were also taking place. The final demise of the old colonial empires in Africa had transformed subject peoples into free, independent and sovereign nations. After decades of military and political struggle, Namibia, the last bastion of orthodox colonialism, had attained sovereign statehood. Even

within South Africa - where a racist system institutionalized and legalized by constitutional mechanism had persisted as the final vestige of the colonial problem in Africa - internal and external resistance to apartheid had produced strong signals for change. In Latin America, plural political systems had replaced several monolithic régimes, while in Asia, years of investment in commerce and technology had produced some of the most prosperous and stable economies of the time. Much of the credit for those achievements must be given to the United Nations. Conceived as a forum for expressing grievances and dealing with international disputes, the United Nations had succeeded in large measure in limiting global damage and enhancing world peace and security.

6. In the politics of the Middle East, and in particular over the question of Palestine, there was a constant threat of political destabilization. The search for a solution had proved elusive, and the issue remained one of the most crucial and explosive in the world. It had been the source of regional conflict with global repercussions, it had been the cause of four wars, more than once causing a super-Power confrontation, and it had created one of the most acute refugee problems until now. The central issue was the question of sovereignty over Palestine. He stressed that the sovereignty of the Palestinians over their land was given full recognition by several United Nations resolutions which had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The search for peace, however, had been intractable and the failure of the United Nations and the international community to resolve the issue had led to the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The history of that injustice had few parallels. The absence of any discernible progress towards a solution of the Palestinian problem had led to the widespread call for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East to consider in a comprehensive manner all aspects of the question. Meanwhile, the PLO had taken a bold step forward on the road to peace, by the clear recognition of the State of Israel. For Israel, the constant concern had been the issue of security, which had, over the years, lost considerable credibility, because the theory that the acquisition of territory had provided Israel with a security zone was undermined by the sophisticated weapons long deployed in the Middle East.

7. He declared that it had become an acceptable fact that any peace negotiations must include the Palestinians as represented by the PLO. That reality was recognized both in the West and sections of the Israeli political system. For others, however, the intransigence to negotiate a durable settlement with the PLO had increased the frustrations of the Palestinians and produced the widely popular intifadah. That widespread resistance, mostly by the young, to Israeli occupation had given the question of Palestine a new urgency and a priority on the United Nations agenda.

8. He concluded by stating that the meeting was therefore of considerable importance, as the Palestinian question remained of profound concern to the international community. The political principles and issues at stake, the potential for conflict and the persistent suffering of the refugees heightened the concern. He urged the initiation of an effective negotiating process based on relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to

self-determination, including the security of all States in the region.

Message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

9. At the opening meeting, a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was read out by his representative, Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief, Division for Palestinian Rights. The message noted that the convening of the African Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was testimony to the importance that the United Nations attached to solving the question of Palestine, which formed the root cause of the conflict in the Middle East. It also affirmed the fact that the efforts to find a solution to the problem continued to be one of the most important preoccupations of the United Nations.

10. In his message, the Secretary-General stressed that the African countries had actively contributed to the important efforts undertaken at the United Nations to bring a just peace to the Middle East which, inter alia, would also ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. Their sustained participation in the international efforts to accelerate the peace process in the Middle East would be an important factor in achieving a comprehensive solution of the Middle East conflict.

11. The message said that the Palestinian uprising in the occupied Palestinian territory, the intifadah, which had now entered its third year, remained a matter of serious international concern. In contrast to the nuances of the diplomatic process, the message of the intifadah was direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which had been in effect for 22 years, would continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people would remain committed to the exercise of its legitimate political rights, including self-determination. During the past year, confrontations involving Israelis and Palestinians had continued unabated, with much bloodshed. Hundreds had been killed and thousands had been wounded, including many children. Incarcerations on a large scale continued. During the past year, the Secretary-General had repeatedly expressed concern at those widespread violations of human rights and had joined the Security Council and General Assembly in calling upon Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. In that atmosphere, it seemed imperative that a way must be found soon to begin an effective negotiating process that could restore hope in the possibility that a just and durable peace could be attained. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/42, had called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The General Assembly had also invited the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment

of a preparatory committee. It also requested the Secretary-General to continue efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference.

12. The message recalled that, during the past year, the United Nations had been intensely involved in activities to bring peace to troubled regions of the world. The Middle East was an explosive area and events or trends in one place almost invariably had repercussions elsewhere. The Secretary-General's regret at the the lack of progress in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict was all the greater given the significant steps that had been taken towards the resolution of other disputes. It was essential that a fully concerted and well co-ordinated effort be undertaken by the international community to help the parties enter into an effective negotiating process that would lead to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Secretary-General would do all that he could to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to him in that regard.

Statement by the Chairman of the Seminar

13. H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Seminar, stressed that the Seminar and NGO Symposium being held in the capital of Sierra Leone, a country with a proud history of struggle for independence and a long-standing tradition of support for the full exercise by all peoples of their national sovereignty and right to self-determination, testified to the determination of the people of Sierra Leone to give increased support to the United Nations in its efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and to promote peace in the Middle East. She stressed that, for over 40 years, the United Nations had worked unremittingly to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. As a part of that effort, the United Nations had established, in 1975, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, with the mandate of drafting and carrying out a programme of action designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as defined by the General Assembly in many pertinent resolutions. In order to mobilize world public opinion in support of the Palestinian cause, the Committee had organized, since 1980, a number of seminars and symposia, as well as international meetings for NGOs.

14. The Committee was heartened by the proclamation at Algiers on 15 November 1988 of an independent Palestinian State and the Palestinian peace initiative and important statements made subsequently by Chairman Yasser Arafat at the General Assembly meeting at Geneva in December 1988. Those acts of good will, which had received the broad support of the international community, were a valuable contribution to the Middle East peace process. The declaration of independence and the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine had already been recognized or favourably received by over 100 States. The Palestinian peace initiative was endorsed by numerous States and intergovernmental organizations, such as the Arab Summit Conference, the

European Community, the Warsaw Treaty, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

15. All those facts amply illustrated the international community's determination to promote a just and lasting solution to the tragic problem. However, the Committee deeply regretted that the Government of Israel had so far not responded positively to the Palestinian peace initiative or recognized the legitimacy of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. On the contrary, it was stepping up its acts of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, where the civilian population was subjected to bloody armed repression and collective punishments, such as the closing of schools and the destruction of homes. By those actions, Israel had chosen to turn its back on the efforts made for a settlement of the Middle East conflict, in spite of many appeals to that effect addressed to it by the international community. It was encouraging to note that many sectors of the Israeli public continued to distance themselves from the regrettable practices of their Government. In that connection, she welcomed the significant increase in participation by Israeli NGOs and individuals, including well-known personalities from the mainstream of Israeli politics, in seminars and meetings of NGOs organized by the Committee. The same could be said of Jewish organizations in North America and Western Europe.

16. The international community could not remain indifferent to the large and ever-increasing number of Palestinians, most of them women or children, who were injured or killed daily. According to the most recent human rights reports, the number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the intifadah had reached 860 by the end of February 1990. That situation was all the more grave and disturbing because, despite the international outcry over repeated violations of human rights in the occupied territory and the adoption by the Security Council of several resolutions requesting the occupying Power to abide by the relevant international instruments and United Nations resolutions, Israel continued to resort to military force against the Palestinians and to engage in armed attacks against the integrity and sovereignty of countries in the region.

17. She recalled General Assembly resolution 44/42, adopted by 151 votes in favour to 3 against, with 1 abstention, which reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in particular the question of Palestine. It called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee was heartened to note that the international community had also supported -almost unanimously- the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. That support was expressed not only at the level of all United Nations forums, but also through the decisions and official statements of a large number of intergovernmental

organizations. The essential thing was to persevere in that direction. For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People would continue and intensify its endeavours towards convening that Conference particularly through mobilization of public opinion and government support in all regions of the world.

Statement on behalf of the African non-governmental organizations

18. Mr. Morad Ghaleb, Chairman of the African Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine stressed that, for many years, the people of Africa had worked sincerely and closely with the United Nations, regarding the question of Palestine and the African NGOs had fully participated in the efforts to promote public awareness on the Palestinian question, the cause of liberation, social justice, peace and democracy, and to mobilize the African population and world opinion to oppose the Israeli brutal occupation of the Arab territories.

19. Since the proclamation of the State of Palestine, a number of African countries and NGOs had welcomed and officially recognized the State of Palestine. That progressive action had boosted the morale of the Palestinians and strengthened their struggle. While many States had established diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level with the State of Palestine, it was unfortunate that some African countries were also establishing diplomatic relations with the Israeli Government. The African Co-ordinating Committee considered that move as not in favour of the struggle of the people of Palestine. He called for using all means and all forms of struggle to promote solidarity among the peoples in Africa and in the Middle East. Moreover, Israel and South Africa should be isolated for the cause of justice and freedom. Whereas the situation in South Africa was changing gradually in the right direction, Israel remained stubborn. The relationship between the two States remained strong in all fields, including nuclear co-operation. The possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction underscored the menace to peace and security in the Middle East and Africa. Boycotts and sanctions against Israel and South Africa should be maintained and strengthened until apartheid was totally dismantled in South Africa and until Israel withdrew from the occupied Palestinian State.

20. The issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel had assumed serious proportions raising the legitimate concern of all the peoples of the world, particularly the Arab world. Israel and the United States were trying to create a rift between the Arab world and the Soviet Union. The migration of Jews to Israel would cause danger and more tension in the Middle East and would be a serious obstacle to the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. The efforts to promote and to safeguard peace and security in the Middle East must continue. The Israeli brutal suppression of the people violated basic human rights in the Arab occupied territories. Although the impact of the new trend in solving international conflicts was being felt all over the world, the situation in the Middle East was not one of peace and security. Israel continued to violate basic human rights in Israel and Palestine and launched criminal and repeated aggressions against Lebanon

in search of the Palestinians and to destroy the liberation movement. Analysing the work of African NGOs, he said that they were engaged in many activities in support of the people of Palestine and the intifadah. He stressed that there was a need for African NGOs to intensify and to co-ordinate their work in a systematic manner.

Message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

21. A message from H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was read by Mr. S.H. Gerjawi, Ambassador of Palestine in Sierra Leone. The message stated that the meeting was being held at a time when the Palestinian people was continuing its just struggle and its indomitable national intifadah. Through that struggle, the Palestinian people was confirming its rejection of the Israeli occupation and its determination to resist the occupiers and defy the "iron-fist" and "bone-breaking" policies which were being pursued by the Israeli Government, its armed forces and its settlers. The Palestinian people was continuing to resist the Israeli occupation authorities and their sophisticated military machine and methods of repression. The struggle for that resistance derived from the unyielding national will, the unshakable national unity, the profound belief in justice of its cause and the overwhelming solidarity with the PLO.

22. The message emphasized that in spite of tremendous sacrifices, the Palestinian people was continuing to manifest its desire for peace and its commitment to its peace initiative aimed at the achievement of a just and lasting peace in Palestine, the land of prophets and divinely revealed religions, the land of love and peace. The entire world had responded by expressing full support for that initiative and, for its part, the United States Administration had begun a dialogue with the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. However, that dialogue was still being impeded by numerous obstacles, because the United States Administration had failed to raise the level of the dialogue and was still manifesting overt bias in favour of Israeli obstinacy and aggression, thereby impeding the peace process, perpetuating the Israeli occupation and consolidating the fait accompli, which Israel was attempting to create through the implementation of its plan to promote the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and their settlement in the occupied land of Palestine with a view to changing the demographic character of that land within the context of the ongoing endeavours to establish a "Greater Israel", with all that that implied by way of flagrant violations of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and disregard of international human rights instruments and the Fourth Geneva Convention notwithstanding all the serious dangers that the entire situation posed in the Middle East region, including disruption of the sincere endeavours that were being made to further the peace process.

23. The message stressed fraternal and sincere congratulations to the valiant Namibian people, which had achieved its independence after a long struggle against racism and racial discrimination, as well as to the struggling people

of South Africa on the occasion of the release of Nelson Mandela, and confirmed the full support for the struggle of the people of South Africa for freedom, justice, equality and liberation from the yoke of racism and apartheid.

24. The message stressed that the Namibian people's victory made the Palestinian people more confident of the forthcoming achievement of its own victory. It was hopeful and highly confident that the international community and the freedom-, justice- and peace-loving forces would increase and intensify their support for the Palestinian peace initiative, which clearly confirmed the Palestinian people's sincere desire to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region through the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of the relevant international resolutions and the people's right to self-determination. Such support would intensify the steadfastness in the face of the Israeli occupation and strengthen its determination to continue its just struggle to put an end to the oppression, suffering and occupation so that it could live in freedom in its independent and sovereign State like the other free peoples of the world.

Other statements

25. At the opening meeting, statements in support of the just cause of the Palestinian people, were made by Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo, on behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko, Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr. Nabil Marouf, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; and Mr. Ngung Etul Mowotsh, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

Messages adopted by the participants

26. The participants in the Seminar and NGO Symposium adopted a message of protest to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel (annex I). They also adopted a message to H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (annex II) and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Sierra Leone (annex III).

B. Panel presentations

27. Three panels were established. The panels and the panelists were as follows:

Panel I: (i) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (ii) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"

Mr. Vital Balla (Congo), Mr. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (Israel), Mr. Yehia El-Gamal (Egypt), H.E. Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal), Mr. Moibo Noumoudion Kouyate (Mali), Mr. Michael Lanigan (Ireland), Mr. Andrew Seleke (African National Congress), Mr. A.S. Zasypkin (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), and Mr. Salah Zuheikeh (Palestinian)

Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"

Mr. Jirries Issa Atrash (Palestinian)

Panel III: "The mobilization of public opinion in the African region for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

Mr. Farouk Abu Eissa (Sudan), Mr. Bukar Bukarambe (Nigeria), Mr. Gipu Felix-George (Sierra Leone), Mr. Ahmed Gora Ebrahim (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania), Mr. Lamine Juwara (Gambia), Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland)

Panel I

(i) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (ii) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"

28. Mr. Vital Balla, Chairman of the Congolese Association for Friendship among Peoples, pointed out that in the last decade of the twentieth century, there continued to be crises such as that of the Middle East and that of southern Africa that seriously jeopardized the most fundamental rights of the human person and elementary principles of coexistence among peoples. The question of Palestine continued to be a challenge to the international community and the source of that crisis was the negation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. He affirmed that his Association considered that the problem as a political and above all a legal issue, and the quest for a solution to it was a challenge to the international community. The resolution of the problem involved the elimination of all forms of domination and occupation as well as an acceleration in the process of self-determination of the Palestinian people. It also involved a commitment by the international community to the elimination of colonialism. The United Nations should be able to establish a machinery for holding an internatinal conference with the parties directly concerned. Further, a standing Committee of Jurists on Palestine and Peace in the Middle East should be set up to investigate and monitor Israel's conduct in respect of international law in general and United Nations resolutions, the International

Human Rights Covenants and the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols thereto in particular. That presupposed the adoption of sanctions by international organizations and by individual States, similar to those imposed on South Africa.

29. Mr. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, founding member of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, noted that the Palestinian uprising had come as a great shock to Israel's body politic. The early leaders of political zionism, had addressed two challenges: the mobilization of world Jewry to carry out the realization of the Zionist programme and the support of major world powers. The resistance of the Arab natives of Palestine was not fore seen and it turned out to be the most serious challenge in the long run. The Israelis tried to overcome the native resistance pragmatically and presented it as an expression of criminal violence. In 1948, the natives had disappeared from official consciousness, and Israel could claim that the issue was the enmity of neighbouring States, a "normal" conflict between nation-states. Since 1948, the official Israeli position had been one of readiness for direct talks with the neighbouring Arab countries. That was a reflection of the principle of not negotiating with the natives, who, according to Zionist doctrine, should have no political rights. He declared that the Palestinians, today, had returned from oblivion, to exercise the veto power of the oppressed. The Palestinians had developed from a nuisance to an obstacle and now to a real enemy. Before 1967, there was only "the refugee problem", recognized by the United Nations and expected to disappear eventually. However, the Palestinians had always been a party to the events in the Middle East, at least as spoilers or catalysts. He noted that only three years before, Israeli political debates had been permeated with the grand illusion of victory. There had been much discussion of the de facto annexation of the occupied territories. The intifadah had put a clear end to that illusion. It was a people's war in the best tradition of other anti-colonialist struggles. That heroic struggle had changed both the reality and the images of Israelis and Palestinians. Israel's nuclear weapons, and its chemical and biological arsenal, were of no use in the intifadah war. Conventional military means and elite counter-insurgency units were of no use either. He concluded by saying that the intifadah had been a major strategic defeat for Israel, much greater than any previous set back in the history of zionism. Facing a world that had entered into a new era of compromise, negotiations and settlement, it was inevitable that Israelis and Palestinians would become a part of that process.

30. Mr. Yehia El-Gamal, member of the People's Assembly (Egyptian Parliament) and Professor at the Faculty of Law at Cairo University, elaborated on the historic origins of the idea of the International Peace Conference. He referred to the establishment of a Conciliation Commission for Palestine in 1948, analysed the Arab position through 1973 and stressed that the concept of the Conference had first been put forward in Security Council resolution 338 (1973). In 1974, the Geneva Conference had been unable to take any positive step to tackle the root cause of the problem, namely the Arab-Israeli conflict, which lay at the heart of the question of Palestine. Later, in the 1970s, there had been an evident Arab trend towards a peaceful negotiated settlement with Israel but Israel had continued to totally reject a negotiated

peace, since it was seeking a peace that would enable it to absorb all the Palestinian territory and control the entire region. By General Assembly resolution 36/120 C, the international community approved the idea of an international peace conference attended by all the parties to the conflict. He also referred to the Venice Declaration of the European Community and noted that it had clearly favoured the idea of an international peace conference. However, Israel rejected the idea. The Likud bloc was refusing to recognize the PLO and, to admit that Israel was occupying the territory of others by force. It was rejecting the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian State. The Labour Party accepted the idea of the Conference as an umbrella for negotiations, but was also rejecting the right to self-determination, the recognition of the PLO and the Palestinian State. He concluded by saying that the only solution lay in the continuation of the intifadah, which could facilitate the development of the currently limited trends in Israeli public opinion in favour of the concept of a just peace.

31. H.E. Mr. Latyr Kamara, Honorary Ambassador from Senegal, pointed out that the current international situation, stemming from the events which occurred in Eastern Europe, had contributed to a new co-ordinated policy for peace, indicating the settlement of regional conflicts. That new policy was beginning to have an impact in the Middle East, despite difficulties. Analysing the Israeli peace plan, he said that it appeared to postulate filling the gap created after the failure of a Palestinian-Jordanian Arab confederation, which had been strongly supported by the United States. The convening of the International Peace Conference encountered obstacles and continued to be dependent on negative factors, such as the pro-Israeli and ambiguous position of the United States and Israel's obstinacy. The surest guarantee of the convening of the conference was the unequivocal position of the international community expressed in General Assembly resolution 43/176. He noted that the American peace plan, like the Egyptian plan, presupposed, implicitly at least, the holding of an international conference. However, the current initiatives aiming at organizing elections in the occupied Palestinian territory had undermined the efforts to convene the conference. The intifadah, he emphasized, was the violent expression of sentiments and resolutions, which had reached maturity and had for long been contained and which had now exploded. It had helped to underscore the need for the formulation and implementation of a just settlement of the question of Palestine. Since that question lay at the heart of the Middle East problem, its solution would lead to an overall settlement of the conflicts throughout the region. Referring to the influx of new Jewish immigrants and their possible settlement in the occupied territories, he stated that no action seemed to have been taken to seriously oppose such settlement, which could render the permanent occupation of those territories irreversible. In conclusion, he called for pressure to be maintained and increased on the few forces that were impeding progress towards peace, in particular Israel and the United States of America. He said that the United Nations was obviously the most appropriate body to take new initiatives and assume responsibilities by creating conditions conducive to the establishment of a State of Palestine. The manifold pressures that should be brought to bear on the United States and

Israel should be accompanied by serious endeavours to encourage the heroic combatants of the intifadah, with a view to making the impact of that popular uprising stronger, more effective and decisive in the process of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

32. Mr. Modibo Noumoudion Kouyate, Deputy of the Malian National Assembly, stressed that at a time when the relaxation of world tension, the settlement of regional conflicts or a reduction in their intensity was taking place, the Middle East problem, despite its seriousness and its possible repercussions on international peace and security had continued to spread death and desolation. As a consequence of Israel's occupation of the entire territory of Palestine, most Palestinian Arabs were today either refugees or displaced persons. The intifadah was a general uprising capable of continuing and of resisting a well-equipped army. That was an uprising which could not be crushed by force. Israel had to understand that it must negotiate. The proclamation of a Palestinian State by the PLO at the historic Nineteenth session of the Palestine National Council irrefutably conferred upon the PLO the status of a party to the dialogue. By intensifying their struggle, the Palestinian people was shaking up traditions in Israel and the Israeli society had reached a point where it wondered whether its Government might not be missing a great historic opportunity for peace. He stressed that the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East was still the ideal solution to that distressing problem. The Palestinian peace initiative had created conditions favourable to a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The conference should consider the objective conditions likely to lead to peace, such as the Israeli withdrawal from Palestinan territory occupied since 1967, the settlement of the Palestinian refugee problem, dismantling of the settlements in the territories occupied since 1967, and guarantee of free access to the Holy Places and religious sites. He concluded by saying that the current relaxation of tensions in international relations should be exploited with the object of settling one of the most long-standing, painful conflicts, the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is fraught with consequences for world peace and security.

33. Mr. Michael Lanigan, Leader of the Irish Senate, emphasized that the world was facing a time of unprecedented political change and of potential realignment of its political and economic powers. There was a danger in the new realignments and, in the short term, a buildup of regional, ethnic and religious tensions would need the full attention of the international community. He said that, fortunately, the Middle East had continued to hold the attention of the larger nations who were prepared to devote time and attention to assist in the resolution of its problems. He welcomed the initiative by the Secretary of State of the United States as an effort to broker a first-ever Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. He regretted that Israel, so far, had been unable to take that step and been unwilling to agree to meet Palestinian representatives who would have a mandate to speak on behalf of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. He noted that the window of opportunity was limited.

34. Refferring to the emigration of Soviet Jews, he said that the danger of that unprecedented emigration was that the Israelis might allow or encourage those immigrants to settle in the occupied territories and that Palestinians would be expelled from their homes. That influx of Jewish immigrants could destabilize the whole area of the Middle East if they were settled in the occupied territories. The international community should ensure that the rights of Soviet Jews were not exercised at the expense of the rights of the Palestinians of the occupied territories. He called for a new and major initiative towards convening the International Peace Conference. The development of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Israel would eliminate one of the major stumbling-blocks to that conference. He stressed that it was imperative that the initiatives of the PLO should not be forgotten. On the international political stage, the Palestinians were growing in stature. He assured the Israelis that their future and security as a fully recognized international State were respected but they must give due recognition to the rights of the Palestinians. He called upon the United States to use its diplomatic and monetary power to ensure the convening of the International Peace Conference. Referring to the role of Western Europe, he emphasized that historic ties, geographic proximity, patterns of trade and economic independence ensured that the tragic divisions and instabilities of the Middle East would remain a matter of consistent concern and priority for Ireland and its partners in the European Economic Community. The European Governments had to keep up the momentum which had emerged recently and take advantage of every opportunity to push the conference concept. He stressed that the intifadah had been of tremendous importance in concentrating the attention of the media world-wide, on the conditions of life of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. It was a statement of their rejection of the inhuman conditions under which they had been forced to exist for the past generations. It was also an expression of genuine democratic reaction to oppression. Israeli as well as world opinion was changing as a result of the intifadah. He concluded by stating that the intifadah had brought world opinion to the side of the Palestinians, which must now be channelled into support for a lasting resolution of that tragic conflict.

35. Mr. Andrew Seleke, deputy editor of the African National Congress journal Mayibuye, said that the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people rested heavily on the conscience of the international community, especially those countries that had an enormous influence on the thinking of the leadership in Israel. The right to self-determination had to take into account the right of all countries and States in the Middle East, including the State of Palestine, to exist as independent and sovereign States. He stated that the international community, especially the influential forces, had the power, if they had the will, to force the Israeli Government to agree on the convening of the International Peace Conference to be attended by all forces involved in the Middle East conflict. The Israeli leadership should not be allowed to dictate the terms to the world. Referring to the situation in South Africa, he said that, it was the internal pressure combined with the international pressure that had unlocked the South African prisons. The same was true for Namibia. Israel could not be an exception to that rule. The intransigence of the Israeli leadership was an indictment of the world

conscience and its readiness to act against that crime. He pointed out some factors that had brought about the convening of the Conference, among that the struggle of the Palestinian people themselves, the government crisis in Israel, which was the direct result of the intifadah and, the struggle of the progressive forces within Israel, the pressure of the international community and the conducive international climate for negotiated settlement of regional conflicts. Those factors must be viewed as an integrated process towards the solution of the Middle East conflict.

36. Mr. A. S. Zasypkin, Head of the Department of Middle Eastern and North African Countries in the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that a full settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and solution to the Palestinian problem were important at the regional level and that it was of great general significance. The Middle East could not remain isolated from world-wide processes. Confrontation, the arms race and massive violations of human rights, which were prevalent characteristics of that region, must give way to peace, good-neighbourly relations and co-operation. A settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict was being impeded by the policy of Israel, which is flouting the national rights of the Palestinians and occupying Arab territories. However, the intifadah had shown that the Palestinian people was determined to exercise its right to self-determination. The intifadah had now become a complex social, economic and political movement which had modified the status quo in the region.

37. He emphasized that progress towards peace in the Middle East must be based on the principle of the supremacy of human ideals. A balance of interests based on free choice, equal rights and equal security for all the States and peoples of the region constituted the corner-stone of the peace process. An international conference would provide the most acceptable framework for the peace efforts. Application of the principle of a variety of approaches to the convening of the conference would boost those efforts. The Israeli-Palestinian dialogue could play a particularly important role if it was regarded as a step towards the convening of the conference, as one of several approaches to its preparation, and as an integral part of an overall settlement. The consultations among the five permanent members of the Security Council and the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the Middle East were still highly relevant. The idea of setting up a group of experts within the United Nations to study regional security questions in the Middle East also deserved attention. He also stressed that the Soviet-American dialogue, which was moving from mutual understanding towards collaboration, could play a positive role. He stated that the Israeli Government's policy of settling immigrants in the occupied territories was seriously impeding the development of the peace process. The international community, which had already condemned that policy as illegal, should intensify its efforts to obtain an undertaking by Israel not to populate the occupied territories with immigrants and to cease the establishment of settlements. He called upon the United Nations, whose importance in international affairs was constantly increasing, to play a co-ordinating role in the quest for a full settlement.

38. Mr. Salah Zuheikeh, Head of External Affairs in the Arab Journalists Association in West Bank and Gaza, pointed out that since the intifadah had broken out over two years before, the Palestinian people in the occupied territories had been subjected to a system of collective punishment on a massive scale. He presented figures of victims who died or were wounded as a direct result of Israeli action. He described the Israeli practices used against Palestinians who had been subjected to varying forms of arrest. At a time when Israel made an issue of the rights of Jewish immigrants to Palestine it was destroying Palestinian homes and expelling Palestinians across the borders. Entire villages and population centres were subjected to prolonged curfew. More recently, the authorities had resorted to financial extortion and pressure. The situation in the occupied territories and in Israel was explosive. He explained that the intifadah had two main goals, freedom and independence. The call for freedom addressed the unnatural situation of one people occupying another. Since 1967, Israel had not just occupied territory conquered in the 1967 war, it had also occupied a people without giving them any rights. As long as the people living in the occupied territory were kept outside the Israeli political system, Israel could cope with their growing numbers. The intifadah was the Palestinians way of saying that that situation could not continue for ever. As for independence, the second avowed aim of the intifadah, he said, it was a purely Palestinian matter relating to their self-consciousness as a people, to their identity and to their right to sovereignty. He stressed that the PLO in November 1988 had formulated a very clear vision of peace, presenting Israel, the Palestinian people and all the people of the region with a unique opportunity. It offered a bridge to cross from war to peace: two States for two peoples. In contrast, the Israeli Government had come up with a plan for delaying talks about a final settlement, the so-called election proposal. He concluded by saying that there was nothing now on the horizon to show that Israel could really come up with an alternative. Israel's image as a peacemaker was not going to match its image as a warrior.

Panel II

"The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"

39. Mr. Jirries Issa Atrash, advisor in the Economic and Planning Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, pointed out that during the occupation of the Palestinian territory by Israel, its policies had systematically blocked the economic development of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The main objective had been to confiscate land and displace people. On the West Bank 52 per cent of the Arab lands and in Gaza 42 per cent had been taken over for Israeli settlements and for military use. The occupying Power had also undertaken to deprive the Palestinians of their basic right to water. The result was a significant reduction in total agricultural production. The suppression of the industrial sector of the Palestinian

economy had been similarly systematic. Concerning trade, Israel used the occupied territory as a dumping ground for inferior products, which could not be sent abroad. Palestinian industrial and service workers were deprived of employment opportunities in the domestic market as a consequence of deteriorating economic conditions in the occupied territory and were forced to work in the Israeli market for low wages. He also stated that there had been no construction of residential buildings for Palestinians by the public sector since 1968. International economic aid was applied by the Israeli military to infrastructure rather than economic development projects. The closure of Arab banks had left the territory with no banking and financial system to meet immediate needs and to contribute to economic development. In summarizing his analysis, he stated that the Palestinian territory had been paralyzed and its capability for growth and development undermined.

40. Characterizing the strategy and policy of the PLO in the economic field, he noted a positive change was taking place in the political economy of the occupied Palestinian territory, while certain steps were necessary for achieving and sustaining growth in agriculture and industry. The main directions of the PLO strategies were a geographical redistribution of industry and manufacturing in favour of the rural areas, placing more emphasis on advanced technology in agriculture and industry, accelerating agricultural development and securing the food production level; designing adjustment programmes suited to the social and economic conditions of the Palestinians; improving market access for exports from the occupied territory; improving domestic resources and mobilization programmes; and expanding trade relations with African and European nations. He stressed that the PLO had sustained a consistent vision for the future of the Palestinians living in peace in their own homes and in an economically thriving State. He then described the work of the Palestinian Martyrs' Sons Work Society, known as SAMED, which was the most important organization for developing Palestinian relations with Africa. He concluded by saying that despite all obstacles, the PLO had worked decisively to develop the region and to help the Palestinian people to achieve its goal of an independent State.

Panel III

"The mobilization of public opinion in the African region for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

41. Mr. Farouk Abu Eissa, Secretary-General of the Arab Lawyers' Union, pointed out that the mobilization of public opinion in the African region for the promotion and realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people was particularly important and that it was necessary to take effective action to counter the Israeli schemes, to bring pressure to bear for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to ensure legal protection for Palestinians under the auspices of the United Nations, to provide material and moral support for the Palestinians in the occupied territories through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and to counter the dangers of co-operation between South Africa and Israel. For mobilization of African public opinion, use

should be made of the various information media - television and radio, the press, news agencies, etc. - the dissemination of United Nations resolutions on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people should be undertaken, in order to call attention to the dangers and counter the Israeli schemes and to overcome the weakness of NGOs in Africa. In order to express solidarity with Palestinian journalists and their national cause, seminars could be held, initiatives taken and information campaigns carried out through the journalists' unions, in co-operation with European and American unions and personalities. He suggested that profitable use could also be made of the Union of African Parliaments and of the African parliaments themselves in order to mobilize public opinion. Further the African movement of solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people could be developed in co-operation with the African Governments, and Governments should support NGOs.

42. Political parties, workers' unions, women's, youth and student organizations, professional associations and religious societies could be won over and the important role of the Church and the Mosque in the mobilization of public opinion in each country could be enlisted in carrying out wide-scale activities in solidarity with the rights of the Palestinian people and its legitimate struggle. Palestinian and Arab relations with Africa should be developed and strengthened within the framework of the Organization of African Unity, through the committees for the support of the African liberation movements and the African Human Rights Committee, through the revival of the Afro-Arab Summit Conferences, and through the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States and the World Council of Churches.

43. Mr. Abu-Eissa stressed the importance of action to counter Israeli violations of Palestinian individual rights and collective rights by proposing a plan of action and a work programme to human rights organizations and associations of lawyers and jurists and by according to the African Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples an important role in that respect. He said that advantage should be taken of the momentum achieved by the struggle in South Africa. He called for joint missions to Palestine or to cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, inviting influential personalities, such as Mr. Mandela and those Africans who have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, Literature, etc., to visit the occupied territories. Lastly, wide-scale action should be taken on a single project under the name of "The right of return of the Palestinians to their land" in order to counter the projected Jewish immigration and draw attention to the rights of the Palestinian people.

44. Mr. Bukar Bukarambe, Senior research fellow in the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, expressed the view that African public opinion could be observed from the continental and the domestic levels. The former was related to the OAU framework where African States show solidarity with the Arab world along a common Afro-Arab front and as a direct result of the Afro-Arab character of the African continent. The latter was related to the impact of domestic politics in individual countries and had the capacity both to support and undermine the wider framework. He stated that there was a quest in many African countries for the resumption of ties with Israel or expansion of existing ones because of the lingering effects of the mass severance of ties with that country which had taken place after the October 1973 war.

45. He said that due to the foreign policy of African States, there was a fair public knowledge of the issues involved, particularly among urban dwellers, the academic community, the professional and labour unions and the business, political and military élite. There was a general understanding of the flight of the Palestinian people, the question of occupied territories and the status of Jerusalem. He stressed that the endeavour of mobilizing African public opinion had to be undertaken within that setting. He stated that within the OAU framework, the sustained diplomatic isolation of Israel had been achieved. However, in recent years, ties with Israel were resumed. He called for a reversal or stopping of that trend. That meant the strengthening of the Afro-Arab framework, which could be achieved through the establishiment and maintenance of a special focus on the flight, the rights and the status of the Palestinian people. Further, bilateral realtions between African and Arab states particularly by way of more frequent higher level visits and other engagements, and contacts at various levels between the Palestinian people and African peoples and Governments should be improved. He said that the Palestinians were known simply as Arabs. Since the principle of the rights of the Palestinian people was bound to that nationalism, it was important to inform other people about the various attributions of their nation. He concluded by saying that advancing the contact to all levels, professions and even faiths would serve at least three purposes: it would shift the focus of the Arab-Israeli conflict emphatically to the rights of the Palestinian people, to increase public awareness of who the Palestinian people were and it would eliminate or reduce drastically any misperceptions about them and their struggle.

46. Mr. Gipu Felix-George, Director-General and Professional Head of Mass Media Services in Sierra Leone, stated that, one nation, Israel, had defied the world's expectations and stood firmly and resolutely against reform and peace, while the world was witnessing a whirlwind of change. Israel's intransigence had caused great hardship, mounting deaths and injuries and increasing frustration. He emphasized that time had come for all media practitioners, particularly those in Africa, to intensify the campaign for a peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem. Journalists had to maintain their usual condemnation of the Palestine situation and to arrange a media blitz to call the attention of the African people to galvanize their support for a total relief of Palestinian suffering. He called for a regular, meaningful and positive dialogue among African journalists on the Palestinian question. African journalists should sensitize the general African population to the suffering of the Palestinians. They should invoke reactions from decision-makers and the average man in the street to the problems posed by the Israeli Government. African journalists should join the vanguard of the great march towards bridging the gap between the Israeli people and the Palestinians. They should effect contacts with their Israeli counterparts with the aim of making the Israeli citizens get a clearer picture of the rapid isolation into which the Israeli Government was plunging them. African journalists must work closely with NGOs and reflect their aspirations and achievements. He emphasized that journalists had a social role to play in the political and social drama. He concluded by saying that journalists must press on until Palestinians and Jews sit side by side, hold hands and exchange one another's goods and services.

47. Mr. Ahmed Gora Ebrahim, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania, emphasized that public opinion in Africa was both sympathetic and supportive of the just Palestinian cause, but there still existed a real need to further strengthen the existing support in Africa. He referred to the decision by the OAU taken following the 1967 war in the Middle East to severe diplomatic ties with Israel, that had led to the recognition of the PLO. The OAU stand also contributed greatly to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution condemning zionism as a form of racism. He expressed the view that following the developments in Eastern Europe, the African vote in the United Nations remained the principal bulwark against the campaign to rescind the said resolution.

48. He said that Israel had embarked on a systematic campaign to restore diplomatic ties with African countries. However, such restoration had not been at the expense of recognizing or denying the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Mr. Ebrahim made a number of proposals for mobilizing public opinion. He stressed that for any campaign to be successful it must be related to the concerns and preoccupation of people to be mobilized. Therefore, it must emphasize the colonization and usurpation of Palestine and link that to the issue of apartheid colonialism in racist South Africa. The ideological similarity, the close military and nuclear collaboration, the exchange of repressive tactics, intelligence co-operation and increasing trade ties aimed at undermining sanctions against South Africa were well-known links between the two States. Special focus on that issue would greatly contribute to sensitizing public opinion in Africa in support of the just Palestinian cause. In South Africa, in Palestine and in recently declared African independent States, repossession of dispossessed land was the core of the problem and the cardinal objective of the struggle. He recommended that the campaign should deliberately target identified groups, like trade unions, political parties, youth, student and women's organizations, vocational groups, media workers and academic and research institutions, who had to be systematically engaged in seminars and solidarity work. He proposed the holding of a joint conference of anti-apartheid organizations and Palestinian solidarity committees. Such a conference should reiterate the similarity between the two struggles, bring the two committees organizationally closer and pave the way for continental action against racism, colonialism and zionism. Finally, the endeavours to redress African economic and debt crisis, and the further strengthening of political ties would greatly contribute towards combatting Zionist and racial penetration into Africa.

49. Mr. Lamine Juwara, diplomat in the Ministry of External Affairs of the Gambia, recalled that the Gambia broke diplomatic relations with Israel in 1973 folllowing a decision by the OAU maintained strong diplomatic ties with the PLO. Discussing the mobilization of public opinion in Africa, he emphasized that wide use should be made of the results of United Nations seminars and symposia by publishing the ideas expressed at these meetings. Referring to the role of the media, he stressed that there was a great need to disseminate more information on the Palestinian question. He expressed the view that the State remained the single force that could mobilize effectively public opinion in Africa. There was a need for Governments to provide more

incentives to the media to propagate the Palestinian cause. Wider use should be made of United Nations or OAU films showing the situation in Palestine. He also emphasized the role of the religious organization in spreading information about the Palestinian issue.

50. Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland), Chairman of the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, said that participants should not try to adapt European experiences into the African situation because the circumstances were very different. He stated that Africans had some advantages when it came to mobilization of public opinion as African Governments were generally supportive of Palestinian rights. In Europe several factors inhibited the mobilization of public opinion. One was the image of Arabs as terrorists. That designation had racist overtones. Such propaganda did not carry the same weight in Africa. Also in Europe, there was emphasis on Jews as the "chosen people". In general, however, NGOs all over had problems. One problem, he said, was that the Palestinians lacked that distinct political and cultural identity in the minds of many people. That made it easy to propagate the notion that since they had no national identity, it did not matter where they settled.

51. He said that the role of the mass media was important in getting information to people. Governments could do more to see that the mass media had opportunities to report objectively on the situation. Few African media could afford to send journalists to Palestine. They had to depend on Western media coverage. There were, however, some international media, including films and videos, that provided objective information. African Governments could assist in getting that information. It cost no less to send journalists to Europe and the United States than to travel to Palestine. Perhaps there was bias on the part of journalists. He proposed that Palestinian journalists, women, artists and lecturers should come come to Africa. They would present the image that Palestinian were an organized society. He also proposed the establishment of twinning arrangements between cities, schools and other institutions. Africa had many well-known musicians. They should be encouraged to organize together with other artists to put on highly publicized events like the Mandela concerts. He said that many strong African organizations needed new approaches.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

52. The participants in the Seminar expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, had created a new momentum for bringing about a solution to this complicated and dangerous conflict on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. The courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, has been dramatically manifested in the continuing and intensified Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, in the occupied Palestinian territory as well as in the Palestinian peace initiative proclaimed in November 1988. The present international climate, which is characterized by the political will to resolve regional

conflicts in a peaceful way through negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, is especially conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. It is imperative that this historic opportunity not be missed and that efforts be redoubled in 1990 to overcome remaining obstacles so that the process of negotiations within the context of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East can be initiated without further delay.

53. The participants in the Seminar noted with appreciation the sustained and continuing support by the Governments and peoples of the African region for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights and for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The position of these States, as manifested in the declarations and resolutions of the OAU, was one of solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine and stressed the importance of intensified Afro-Arab relations both bilaterally and within the framework of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States. They asked, in particular, the Palestine Liberation Organization to intensify and enhance the level of its relations with the African States. The Seminar welcomed the recognition of the State of Palestine proclaimed by the Palestine National Council in November 1988, by many African Governments as a manifestation of solidarity of the countries of the region with the people of Palestine. At the same time, it expressed concern about resuming diplomatic ties with Israel by some African States.

54. The participants in the Seminar, in reviewing developments concerning the question of Palestine, welcomed the decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council at Algiers in November 1988 as reflected in its Political Communiqué and the constructive position taken by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly at Geneva on 13 December 1988, which presented the Palestinian peace initiative. These developments had led to the adoption of resolution 43/176 on 15 December 1988 and have become important landmarks in the international endeavours aimed at achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The Seminar also noted with great satisfacion the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. The participants, were greatly encouraged by the vote on this balanced and comprehensive resolution (151 votes in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention), which was supported by an even larger number of States including all member States of the Organization of African Unity, and for the first time, by all member States of the European Economic Community. This important development once again reflected the overwhelming support of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five for the exercise of its inalienable rights. In this context, the participants permanent members of the Security Council. In order to realize, inter alia, the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, the Conference should be convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other relevant

resolutions. The participants noted with regret that the negative position of a permanent member of the Security Council and another State, party to the conflict, had obstructed the implementation of resolution 44/42.

55. The participants noted that there existed a wide measure of agreement within the international community that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East should be based on the principles outlined in General Assembly resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and 44/42 of 6 December 1989, and it should include the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region, including Israel and Palestine, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and finally, a satisfactory solution of the Palestine problem based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the occupied Palestinian territory.

56. The Seminar received reports regarding political developments in Israel resulting from the intifadah. The Palestinian uprising has had far-reaching effects on every aspect of Israeli politics. Specifically, it has led to a major government crisis and has helped the progressive forces fighting for a just peace to engage in dialogue and joint activities with the Palestinians as a way to promote mutual understanding and reconciliation and to break down prejudices and stereotypes. The participants warmly appreciated the demonstration in Jerusalem "1990, Time for Peace" held from 29 to 31 December 1989 where many persons including Israelis and Palestinians supported peaceful negotiations, respect for civil and human rights and the "two peoples, two States" principle. They considered that the United Nations should offer its good offices and organize appropriate activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices.

57. The participants expressed serious concern at the continued grave violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, causing even greater suffering to the Palestinian people under occupation with far-reaching emotional, socio-economic and demographic consequences. The entire international community, as represented at the United Nations, has repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory are in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, to which Israel is a High Contracting Party, and also contrary to United Nations resolutions and to generally recognized norms of international law. The participants appealed to the Contracting Parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to respect and to ensure respect for the provisions of the Convention. A matter of special concern for the participants was the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of the brutal Israeli practices. The increased restrictions of the movement of individuals, health and social welfare organizations as well as the constant daily obstacles and harassments have produced inhuman and intolerable conditions.

58. The process of Israeli colonization of the Palestinian territory as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and the brutality of settler vigilantism was unequivocally rejected and condemned by the participants. They noted with appreciation that the entire international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and stressed that Israel bore full responsibility for those illegal practices. The participants noted the systematic increase in the number of Jewish immigrants to Israel and deplored the recent statements by the Government of Israel regarding the settlement of those immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory at a time when Israel denied the Palestinians the right to return to their homes. Any such action will be illegal and will complicate the attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. The participants appealed to Governments to ensure that members of the Jewish community emigrating to Israel were not used as a tool to perpetuate and strengthen the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, in conformity with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which says in article 12, inter alia, that the right of everyone to liberty of movement and freedom to chose his residence and the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own "shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present covenant". In this connection, participants took note of the recent meeting of the Security Council and its consideration of the "unlawful Israeli moves to settle the occupied territories". They urged the Council to condemn the settlement of immigrants in the occupied territories, declare it illegal and consider them as a new and serious obstacle to peace and to call upon the Israeli Government to review and abandon its obstructionist position.

59. The participants were of the view that the intifadah was a clear manifestation of the popular and democratic expression of the collective will of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation that has given the struggle of the Palestinian people its hitherto suppressed identity and moral ascendancy. The intifadah, now in its third year, embraces three dimensions: the overt, visible and fearless resistance to the Israeli occupation and the indivisibility of the Palestinian people and its sole and legitimate leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization; the opportunity for social transformation and nation-building as the embodiment of statehood through the establishment of authentic, alternative popular infrastructure of the Palestinian society; and, finally, the intifadah was instrumental in bringing about a clear-cut political articulation and direction as manifested through the Palestine National Council decisions of November 1988. The participants supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations that the message of the intifadah was direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which had been in effect for 22 years, was unacceptable and would continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people will remain committed to the exercise of its legitimate political rights, including self-determination.

60. The participants welcomed the fact that the Government of the United States of America had opened a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization and emphasized that the level of the dialogue should be raised and its scope should be expanded to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

61. The Seminar participants appealed to the international community and, in particular, to the United Nations Security Council to take urgent measures to ensure physical protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian people in all the territories under Israeli occupation. They urged the Security Council to take into account the gravity of the acts of violence and human rights violations, including the so-called policy of "transfer" or deportation of Palestinians, which have been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly, and other forms of repression by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory. They requested the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to ensure protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. The participants again stressed the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and demanded that Israel abide by the Convention.

62. The participants welcomed the courageous steps taken by the Palestinians during the intifadah to end the Israeli occupation and to set up an alternative infrastructure as a foundation for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. The Seminar considered that intensified efforts towards genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, were a necessary corollary to renewed efforts to achieve a political solution of the question of Palestine.

63. The participants urged the Government of Israel to respond positively to the peace initiative of the Palestine Liberation Organization which had been welcomed and praised by the entire international community. Israel should recognize that it could no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians and continue to deny them their inalienable rights, in particular, their right to self-determination. The Seminar considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures which would enable the Palestinians to exercise fully their right to self-determination. The participants called upon Israel to respond positively to international efforts aimed at a just and lasting political settlement of the question of Palestine which would be of benefit to all parties concerned, including the international community as a whole.

64. The Seminar participants expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his continuing endeavours to advance the peace process, including the prospects for convening the

International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The participants in the Seminar urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the Conference and to adopt interim measures including the deployment of a United Nations force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final and comprehensive settlement.

65. The participants in the Seminar endorsed the persistent efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and, in particular, the Committee's efforts aimed at facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

66. The Seminar participants took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of and in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East which would, inter alia, ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The participants noted with appreciation that a much larger number of NGOs were participating in the regional NGO symposia and international meetings and requested that extra resources should be made available to cope with this work.

67. The participants in the Seminar requested the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, in full co-operation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine and, in particular, to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, to continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territory, to expand its audio-visual material on the issue, to organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists and to organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

68. Participants drew parallels between the struggle of the Palestinian and South African peoples. They expressed concern about the dangers emanating from the policies pursued by the régimes of Israel and South Africa. In this context they condemned the ever-increasing military and nuclear collaboration between the two régimes.

69. The participants welcomed the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners in South Africa, as well as the unbanning of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and other organizations. At the same time, they urged the South African régime to implement conditions laid down in the unanimous declaration of the special session of the General Assembly against apartheid in December 1989 so as to create a climate conducive to negotiations aimed at eradicating apartheid.

70. Participants congratulated the people of Namibia on their independence and paid a tribute to their supreme sacrifice in achieving that freedom. They noted that the independence of Namibia was the latest proof that the legitimate yearning of a people cannot be denied or ignored forever.

71. Participants also noted that the process of Namibia's independence under United Nations supervision supported the proposal of the Palestine Liberation Organization to hold a similar process in the occupied territories of Palestine. They emphasized that there was a need to involve international supervision to ensure that any peace plan to be implemented in the occupied territories was free and fair.

72. The participants in the Seminar took note with appreciation of the valuable support the Government of Sierra Leone had extended over the years to the just cause of the Palestinian people as well as of the efforts aimed at a just solution of the question of Palestine in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. They also expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Sierra Leone for providing a venue for the African Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, and for the facilities and warm hospitality extended to them.

II.

THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

2 - 5 APRIL 1990

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
Introduction		1-9	30
A.	Opening statements	8	31
B.	Panel Discussion	9	31
C.	Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine	10-30	31
D.	Workshop reports	31-38	35
E.	Membership of the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine	39	38

Introduction

1. The Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 2 to 5 April 1990. This Symposium was held in part together with the Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth African Regional Seminar) on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" (see the preceding report) .

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Head of the delegation; H.E. Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone); H.E. Mr. Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan (India); H.E. Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); and Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Palestine). Mr. Morad Ghaleb, President, Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization and Chairman of the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine was the Moderator of the Symposium.

3. The Symposium was attended by 17 NGOs as participants. In addition, representatives of 14 Governments, Palestine, 3 United Nations specialized agencies and organs and 2 inter-governmental organizations as well as 2 national liberation movements attended as observers.

4. Three panels were established for joint consideration by the Symposium and Seminar participants.

5. Two Workshops specifically related to NGO activities were established for the Symposium to consider the following topics:

(a) "Mobilization and networking by NGOs to ensure the protection of, and to promote assistance to, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation";

(b) "Action by African NGOs to promote efforts to put an end to Israel's violation of human and political rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and to mobilize assistance for them".

6. The Symposium participants unanimously adopted a Declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the two Workshops.

7. The Symposium decided to extend the term of office of the current African Co-ordinating Committee until the next African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine and to expand the membership of the Co-ordinating Committee by one member. Upon the recommendation of the Sierra Leone based NGOs the Symposium unanimously elected the Supreme Islamic Council of Sierra Leone to the newly established vacancy.

A. Opening statements

8. A summary of the opening statements is included in the report of the Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (see part I above, paras. 4-26).

B. Panel discussion

9. A summary of the panel presentations is also included in the report of the Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (ibid., paras. 28-51).

C. Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

10. We, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, convened at the Bintumani International Conference Centre from 2 to 5 April 1990 in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone, declare our total support and solidarity with the Palestinian people, in their struggle for full liberation.

11. We take this opportunity to applaud the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people, and reaffirm positively and unreservedly its extraordinary efforts for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its efforts to engender a new conscience of direction to achieve a just and lasting peace and the establishment of the independent State of Palestine.

12. We whole-heartedly reaffirm our support for the struggle of the Palestinian People to exercise its legitimate and inalienable rights in the spirit and framework of the intifadah.

13. We further support all the Palestinian efforts towards a solution based on the initiative launched at the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestinian National Council, held at Algiers from 12 to 15 November 1988. In particular, we support the declaration of independence of the State of Palestine as a bold and significant contribution towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

14. We call for the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices in accordance with the guidelines as given under the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989,

15. We call upon all Governments to increase pressure both politically and economically on Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem and from the other Arab territories. We urge them to seriously consider the possibility of the use of collective economic sanctions as a proven and effective means of pressure.

16. We call for the strengthening of Afro-Arab solidarity and co-operation in support of the Palestinian cause and appeal to the African countries to further intensify their efforts towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their own sovereign and independent State.

17. We urge the United Nations Security Council to take positive concrete steps to protect the human rights of the Palestinians within the occupied territories and to mobilize all the means within its power to prevent the creation of new settlements, the demolition of houses, the continued closure of institutions of learning, the policy of economic strangulation, as exemplified in cruel tax raids and sieges, as well as the use of administrative detention.

18. We sincerely and fervently hope that the outcome of the Seminar and the NGO Symposium will contribute positively to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which the question of Palestine is the core.

19. We reaffirm our unconditional commitment to support the Palestinian people in its quest to achieve the full realization of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

20. We deplore the Israeli authorities' settlement of Jewish immigrants from the USSR and other countries in the occupied Palestinian territory, which is in flagrant violation of international law. This will further reduce the already limited resources available to the Palestinians of Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. What is more, by drastically changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories, the settlement there of Soviet and other immigrants will push the prospect of a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem yet further away and will further destabilize the already highly volatile situation.

21. We call upon all Governments to take measures that would prevent the continued brutal acts including the use of chemical weapons ("teargas"), which has led to many miscarriages among the Palestinian women and, in some cases, has led to death among the very old and very young, as well as acts of repression against children and workers in the occupied Palestinian territory.

22. We view with grave concern the development of the Israeli nuclear capabilities as a threat to international peace and security, in particular in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

23. We denounce the increasing economic, military and security collusion between Israel and South Africa. This collusion between the two racist régimes is mainly directed against the liberation movements in both South Africa and occupied Palestine as well as against the neighbouring States. Co-operation between Israel and South Africa had extended lately to all fields, including nuclear co-operation. The possession of nuclear weapons of mass destruction by the two régimes remains to be a real danger, an eminent menace to peace and security in the Middle East and Africa and the world at large.

24. We commend all Governments which have recognized the State of Palestine and we call upon all other Governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs to extend all moral, material, financial, diplomatic and other assistance to the new State of Palestine.

25. We urge all African Governments that have relations with Israel to suspend those relations until Israel recognizes the establishment of the free and independent State of Palestine on the territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

26. We call upon African NGOs interested in the question of Palestine, in addition to establishing contact and supporting the efforts of the African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, to establish direct contact with the Palestine Committee for NGOs in Tunis, Tunisia. We call upon the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to establish closer co-operation with both the OAU and the Arab league in enhancing their common efforts regarding the Palestinian question and in particular, mobilization and networking among African NGOs.

27. In order to achieve the desired objectives of our resolution, we, the participants in the NGO Symposium consider advisedly the following programmes of action for implementation:

(a) Establish closer contact with the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP);

(b) Consider all available assistance and facilities that could be provided by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights, in New York, from within the means available to them and in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures of the United Nations;

(c) Identify all significant days in the struggle of the Palestinian people such as 29 November (International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People), 15 November (Palestine National Council), 9 December (beginning of the intifadah) and 30 March (Land Day) for popular activities in their respective countries and communities;

(d) NGOs to call upon their Governments to contact the Government of the United States, to engage in a constructive and expanded dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization;

(e) Continuation in strengthening and supporting the African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine;

(f) Encourage African NGOs to visit the occupied Palestinian territory and to invite Palestinian NGOs from the occupied Palestine territory to tour African States and further mobilize African public opinion, with emphasis on the grass-roots level and on action;

(g) Observe an African-Palestinian Week with exhibitions containing pictures, videos, films and posters about atrocities committed in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(h) Utilize religious and social institutions as platforms for the dissemination of information relating to and promoting a just and lasting peace in Palestine;

(i) Mobilize the national and local media and involve cultural and other groups in the dissemination of information on the question of Palestine. This should include the twinning of towns, villages, hospitals, schools etc. between those in the occupied territories and other countries, to create a more intimate as well as a better informed concern for the Palestinian problem;

(j) Establish exchange programmes for African NGOs to invite Palestinian NGOs from the occupied Palestine territory to tour the African States and further mobilize African public opinion in support of the Palestinian cause;

(k) Invite the Nobel laureates and other international and notable personalities, to take a position and lend their moral support to the cause of the Palestinian people.

28. We append the workshop reports and urge African NGOs to work in a co-ordinated way to implement the recommendation.

29. In conclusion, we wish to extend our unqualified profound gratitude and support to the United Nations and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and in particular, to its indefatigable chairman, Her Excellency, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo for her wise guidance and direction during all our deliberations.

30. We wish to express our profound appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Sierra Leone for hosting the Third African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine in this picturesque international conference hall. We thank our gracious hosts for all their kind assistance and efforts to ensure the success of this Symposium. We thank the Division of Palestinian Rights and the Department of Conference Services for facilitating our work.

D. WORKSHOP REPORTS

WORKSHOP I:* "Mobilization and networking by NGOs to ensure the protection of, and to promote assistance to, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation".

Resource persons: Mr. I. B. Kargbo (Sierra Leone)
Mr. Assih Kossi (Togo)
Mrs. Lucy Nuseibeh (Palestinian)
Mr. Baby Mohamane (Mali)

31. Mr. I. B. Kargbo (Sierra Leone) pointed out that the news media in general had a specific role to play in the dissemination of information to sensitize and mobilize public opinion. The NGOs themselves should mobilize people throughout the world in the effort to end the unlawful treatment of the Palestinian people by Israel. He suggested that a campaign similar to the one against apartheid in South Africa should be launched. He was of the view that the NGOs, as voluntary organizations, could successfully work outside the polarized political camps and reach out internationally to form a strong force to improve the education, health, agricultural and cultural life of the Palestinian people.

32. Mr. Assih Kossi (Togo) said that the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) which he represented, was interested in the question of Palestine and, in this regard, helped to organize the African masses. The OATUU had links with Palestinian workers through the various Palestinian trade unions, and the world trade unions organizations. The OATUU had been following the trends in the occupied Palestinian territory and vehemently condemned the limitations imposed on the Palestinian workers and the Palestinian people in general by Israel. The OATUU condemned the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and the infringements on their right of self-determination. The OATUU sought to mobilize national and international

---

*Action-oriented recommendations of the Workshop are included in the final declaration.

public opinion at all levels through the trade unions, women, and youth associations with a view to promoting human and material resources to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory.

33. Mrs. Lucy Nuseibeh (Palestinian) emphasized the need for the widest possible dissemination of accurate information concerning the plight of the Palestinian people. She recommended that greater co-operation and linkages be established between NGOs worldwide and NGOs based in the occupied Palestinian territory. She observed that the peaceful "1990 March in Jerusalem" had captured international attention and its coverage in the mass media had helped to sensitize the international community with regard to the oppression which the Palestinians were subjected to by Israel. She drew attention to the disparity in the living conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel and to the heavy taxation, which the Palestinians found unbearable, a cause for Palestinian business failures. There were instances of Palestinian businessmen having their bank accounts frozen. The Palestinians were forced out of cultural activities and, in some instances, their plantings either uprooted or burned. The schooling of the Palestinian children was often stopped by the Israeli Government. She recommended the twinning of schools and hospitals between the occupied Palestinian territory and foreign counterparts to publicize the plight suffered by those institutions and to mobilize support for them. She recommended that special days like Palestine Prisoners Day, Palestine Exiled Mothers' Day and the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People be used as rallying points to galvanize support for the Palestinian people.

34. Mr. Baby Mohamane (Mali) stated that the history and struggle of the Palestinian people was and should be of great concern to the world in general. He regretted that little or no interest was being taken in the struggle and suffering of the Palestinian people. Although the Palestinian people were subjected to harsh treatment and brutal acts, and their imprisonment and detention was widespread, there appeared to be no heightened world-wide indignation at their plight. He called for an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territory by Israel.

WORKSHOP II: "Action by African NGOs to promote efforts to put an end to Israel's violation of human and political rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and to mobilize assistance for them".

Resource persons: Rev. Ibrahim Ayyad (Palestinian)
Mr. Muctaru R. A. Kabba (Sierra Leone)
Mr. Benjamin Loukakou (Congo)
Mr. Salah Zuheikeh (Palestinian)

35. Rev. Ibrahim Ayyad (Palestinian) expressed the view that the imposition of sanctions and a boycott of Tel Aviv by the international community was the only effective means of pressure. He observed that the pretensions and propaganda by Israel that the intifadah had originated from outside and was being carried out by Muslim extremists, was a deliberate attempt by Israel to

prejudice the cause of peace and justice. In his opinion, the intifadah was a direct road to peace and would continue until the termination of the occupation and the establishment of the State of Palestine. He maintained that the NGOs had an historic and vital role, to muster the support of the press, church and mosque to achieve the objective of the establishment of the independent State of Palestine. On the issue of influencing American public opinion, he observed that the process was slow as a result of poor coverage, the restrictions placed on journalists to enter the West Bank and Gaza and fallacious reports by the Israeli authorities. He added that the true facts on the Palestinian issue were, however, now filtering through to the American public. He recalled that what was for him the most comforting and consoling scene in Jerusalem had been a massive march which had taken place under the title "1990 Time for Peace". It had been most inspiring for him to see thousands of people, representing various nationalities in the company of Israelis and Palestinians, forming a human chain around the walls of the Holy City, Jerusalem, and calling for a solution to the Palestinian problem.

36. Mr. Muctaru R. A. Kabba (Sierra Leone) observed that the position of most African Governments on the question of Palestine was one of firm, steadfast and unconditional support for the Palestinian people to return to its homeland and property. That position, he noted, had been maintained at various meetings of the United Nations and the OAU. He further observed that the general support of the African population for the Palestinian cause was diffuse, unfocused, and lacking a sustained and continuous organizational expression. In that connection, he indicated that most African national NGOs emphasized activities that were considered to further socio-economic development. Properly sensitized, those NGOs could accord the question of Palestine a prominent place in their activities. He suggested that national committees of NGOs on the question of Palestine, to which the various NGOs could affiliate, should be established. Those national committees would in turn serve as forums for the regular discussion and dissemination of information on the question of Palestine. He said that a case in point, was Sierra Leone, where national NGOs such as the Sierra Leone Palestine Friendship Society and the Pan African Union (PANAFU) were well-organized and could influence government policy. In his view, the national NGO committees would be viable entities that would be able to have access to the media in general. He said that perhaps they published their own newspapers or had published pertinent articles in strategic newspapers and journals. He recommended that the national NGO committees should prepare and disseminate widely observance calendars listing important dates related to the Palestinian struggle and encourage the collaborating NGOs to organize commemorative activities around those days.

37. Mr. Benjamin Loukakou (Congo) proposed that the United Nations information centres be enlisted to assist as valuable partners in the mobilization of public opinion on the question of Palestine. He advocated the intensification of media coverage of Palestinian issues and the institution of specific training programmes for African journalists on Middle East issues. He recommended that African NGOs should forge better links of co-operation with their counterparts in Europe and in North America. He believed that some of the NGOs in Europe and North America had more financial resources at their

disposal that could play a major role in influencing public opinion in their countries in favour of the Palestinian people. Mr. Loukakou recommended that Nobel Laureates, international musicians and sportsmen should be involved in an anti-occupation campaign organized on lines similar to those of the international anti-apartheid effort. He informed the Symposium that the Congolese Palestinian Friendship Society, formed in 1955, was already engaged in such an awareness campaign.

38. Mr. Salah Zuheikeh (Palestinian) recommended that NGO delegations from Africa should visit the occupied Palestinian territory to observe conditions at first hand. Such visits would facilitate exchanges between the delegations and the Palestinian people. He suggested that seminars and lecture tours utilizing Palestinians from the occupied Palestinian territory and elsewhere be organized to provide African NGOs with proper information on the situation. He recommended that conferences be organized for African medical doctors and allied professionals, coupled with visits to the occupied Palestinian territory, in order to keep abreast of developments. He stated that, as a journalist, he could not overemphasize the need for the proper gathering of documentation and dissemination of accurate information on the question of Palestine. It was of paramount importance that information not be merely propagandistic but that it be accurate at all times. Misinformation could be just as harmful and counterproductive as disinformation. He, therefore, recommended that journalists not only visit the occupied Palestinian territory but that they should form partnerships with journalists in the occupied Palestinian territory and, to the extent possible, serve as conduits for the dissemination of information to areas inaccessible to Palestinian journalists in the occupied Palestinian territory.

E. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AFRICAN CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NGOS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

39. The membership of the African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine is as follows:

1. Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO)

2. African Society (Egypt)

3. Arab Lawyers' Union, Cairo (Egypt)

4. The Association of Solidarity and Friendship among the People (Algiers, Algeria)

5. Egyptian United Nations Association, Cairo (Egypt)

6. Mauritius Palestine Friendship Society (Mauritius)

7. Organization of African Trade Union Unity, Accra (Ghana)
8. Palestine Committee for NGOs, Tunis (Tunisia)
9. Pan African Women's Association, Luanda (Angola)
10. Sudanese Women Union, Khartoum (Sudan)
11. Supreme Islamic Council of Sierra Leone*
12. Union of Journalists of Sierra Leone
13. Zimbabwe Palestinian Friendship

*new member

Annex I

MESSAGE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL ADOPTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM ON 2 APRIL 1990

The participants in the United Nations African Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, which are being held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 2 to 6 April 1990, deeply regret the decision of the Israeli authorities to deny travel permit to Mr. Abdulrahman Abu-Alnassir, who had been invited by the United Nations to participate in the Seminar and NGO Symposium. Such a decision deprives the participants in the Meeting of the possibility of sharing information and experiences with the invitee and identifying with him the means to achieve a peaceful and just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

The participants consider this decision as contrary to the rights of freedom of movement and of unimpeded travel to United Nations meetings, which are convened for the purpose of promoting dialogue between the parties and for a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Annex II

MESSAGE FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR AND THE NGO SYMPOSIUM TO H.E. MR. YASSER ARAFAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

We, the participants in the African Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, being held from 2 to 6 April 1990, at Freetown, Sierra Leone, wish to express our deepest gratitude for your gracious message of support conveyed to the Seminar and NGO Symposium by H.E. Mr. S.H. Gerjawi, Ambassador of Palestine to Sierra Leone. We take this opportunity to applaud the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and endorse your extraordinary efforts to open a substantive dialogue for peace in the Middle East and to introduce a new way of thinking about the future.

We reaffirm our solid support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate and inalienable national rights, as dramatically demonstrated over the past two years in the intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory. We salute the historic Palestinian peace initiative launched by the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers from 12 to 15 November 1988, and in particular the proclamation of the State of Palestine, as a bold and significant contribution towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

We sincerely hope that the results of the Seminar and the NGO Symposium will contribute positively to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict of which the question of Palestine is the core. We reaffirm our unconditional commitment to support the people of Palestine until the full realization of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State is achieved.

We regard the significant results achieved at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly and in particular the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, which reaffirms the provisions of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, as an important step towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and express our genuine support for the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his endeavours aimed at early realization of this objective as demanded by the international community.

Annex III

MOTION OF THANKS

The participants in the African Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, being held from 2 to 6 April 1990, at Freetown, Sierra Leone, express their profound thanks to the Government and the people of Sierra Leone for generously providing a venue for this meeting and for the excellent arrangements made which greatly contributed to its success. The participants also wish to convey their sincere gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Hon. Alhaji Dr. Abdul Karim Koroma, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, for his statement of warm support for the Palestinian cause and our Seminar and NGO Symposium. The participants wish to express their appreciation also to H.E. Dr. Bu-Buakei Jabbi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and H.E. Mr. Willie Jones, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their contribution to the Seminar and NGO Symposium. The participants take this opportunity to convey their sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of Sierra Leone for their consistent support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for the active role they have played in advancing the cause of peace and justice in the Middle East on the basis of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.

Annex IV

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS IN THE SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM

Panelists and Resource Persons

Mr. Farouk ABU EISSA (Sudan)

Mr. Jirries Issa ATRASH (Palestinian)

Rev. Ibrahim AYYAD (Palestinian)

Prof. Benjamin BEIT-HALLAHMI (Israel)

Mr. Vital BALLA (Congo)

Mr. Bukar BUKARAMBE (Nigeria)

Mr. Yehia EL-GAMAL (Egypt)

Mr. Ahmed GORA EBRAHIM (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania)

Mr. Gipu FELIX-GEORGE (Sierra Leone)

Mr. Morad GHALEB (Egypt)

Mr. Lamine JUWARA (Gambia)

Mr. Muctaru KABBA (Sierra Leone)

Mr. Latyr KAMARA (Senegal)

Mr. I.B. KARGBO (Sierra Leone)

Mr. Assih KOSSI (Togo)

Mr. Modibo Noumoudion KOUYATE (Mali)

H.E. Mr. Michael LANIGAN (Ireland)

Mr. Mikko LOHIKOSKI (Finland)

Mr. Benjamin LOUKAKOU (Congo)

Mr. Baby MOHAMANE (Mali)

Mrs. Lucy NUSEIBEH (Palestinian)

Mr. Andrew SELEKE (African National Congress of South Africa)

Mr. A.S. ZASYPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republic)

Mr. Salah ZUHEIKEH (Palestinian)

Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, New York

H.E. Mr. Guennadi I. OUDOVENKO
Permanent Representative of
the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to the United Nations, New York

H.E. Mr. Tom Obaleh KARGBO
Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, New York

H.E. Mr. Chirmaya Rajaninath GHAREKHAN
Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York

Mr. Zuhdi Labib TERZI
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, New York

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Naseem MIRZA
Chief
Division for Palestinian Rights
United Nations, New York

Governments

CHINA	Mr. JIAO YUXZ Political Counsellor Chinese Embassy to Sierra Leone
EGYPT	H.E. Mr. Mohamed ABDUL SALAM Ambassador to Sierra Leone
	Mr. Mohsen KAMEL Counsellor
	Dr. Mohamed K. RADI Counsellor

GAMBIA	H.E. Mr. Boukary O. FOFANA High Commissioner to Sierra Leone
	Mr. Lamine JAWARA Head of Chancellery High Commission to Sierra Leone
GHANA	H.E. Mr. Brig A. TSUMASI High Commissioner to Sierra Leone
INDIA	H.E. Mr. Benin Prasad AGARWAL High Commissioner to Sierra Leone
INDONESIA	H.E. Mr. PRATJOJO Ambassador of Indonesia Dakar, Senegal
IRAN (Islamic Republic of)	Mr. MOHAMMADI Second Secretary Embassy to Sierra Leone
ITALY	H.E. Mr. Giorgio PECA Ambassador to Sierra Leone
	Ms. Sabina VETERE Commercial Attaché
LEBANON	H.E. Mr. Jawdatt NOUREDDINE Ambassador to Sierra Leone
LIBERIA	Mr. James Molly SCOTT Counsellor and Counsul Head of Chancellery Embassy of Nigeria, Sierra Leone
MALI	Hon. Medibo Noumoudion KOUYATE Deputy
NIGERIA	Mr. J.S. MAGAJI First Secretary Nigeria High Commission Freetown

PAKISTAN	H.E. Mr. Shafqat Ali SHAIKH High Commissioner to Sierra Leone
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS	H.E. Mr. Vladimir S. NOVOSELTSEV Ambassador to Sierra Leone
	Mr. Victor STRIGANOV First Secretary

United Nations specialised agencies and organs

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)	Mr. Onder YUCER Resident Representative
	Mr. Abdoulie JANNEH Deputy Resident Representative
	Mr. S. NKULIKIYIMFURA Assistant Resident Representative
UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)	Mr. M.H. KAMALI Country Director
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)	Mr. B. BOJANG Deputy Resident Representative

Intergovernmental organizations having received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly as observers

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY	Mr. Ngung Etul MPWOTSH Head of General Political Affairs, Defense and Security
ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE	H.E. Mr. Nabil MAROUF Assistant Secretary-General
	Mr. Belal SASSO

Other organizations having received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly as observers

PALESTINE	H.E. Mr. S. H. GERJAWI Ambassador of Palestine to Sierra Leone
	Mr. Ahmed JABER First Secretary Embassy of Palestine to Sierra Leone
	Mr. Emad MOUSSA Press Attaché Embassy of Palestine to Sierra Leone
	Mr. Samir Amin DAYAB Attaché Embassy of Palestine to Sierra Leone
	Ms. Fatma AHMOUD Attaché Embassy of Palestine to Sierra Leone

National liberation movements

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA (ANC)	Mr. Andrew SELEKE
PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA	Mr. Ahmed Gora EBRAHIM Head of Delegation

Non - governmental organizations

AFRICAN STUDENTS UNION	Mr. Amadu KAMARA
AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION (AAPSO)	Dr. Morad GHALEB Mr. Zolile MAGUGU
ARAB LAWYERS UNION (SUDAN)	Mr. Farouk ABU EISSA

ASSOCIATION MALIENNE D'AMITIE ET DE SOLIDARITE AVEC LE PEUPLE PALESTINIEN ET LA NATION ARABE (AMASPA)	Mr. Mahamane BABY
ASSOCIATION CONGOLAISE D'AMITIE ENTRE LES PEUPLES (ACAP)	Mr. Vital BALLA Mr. Benjamin LOUKAKOU
MANDELA YOUTH ORGANIZATION (MYO)	Mr. Daniel SESAY Mr. Sullay TEJAN-SIE Mr. Hassan ABDOUL SESAY Mr. Abdul Salaam SAMUSI Mr. Anthony A. KOROMA
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSLIM WOMEN ORGANIZATION - Sierra Leone	Mrs. Alari COLE
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN	Mrs. Daisy BONA Mrs. Bernadette COLE Miss Alice KAMERA Mrs. Marie YANSANEH
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS (OATUU)	Mr. Assih KOSSI
PALESTINE ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN (PAW) - Sierra Leone	Ms. Nahla GERJAWI Ms. Bushra MUA'ALLEM Ms. Najah AYOUB
PALESTINE COMMITTEE FOR NGOS	Rev. Ibrahim AYYAD
PAN-AFRICAN UNION	Mr. Olu AWOONOR-GORDON Mr. Olarewadu I. RASHID Mr. Ismail O.D. RASHID Ms. Isahu RASHID Mr. Sidi JALLOH Mr. Rahim I. CAMARA Mr. Matthew ABDULLAHI
SIERRA LEONE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION	Mr. Mohamad Alpha BUN-MANSARAY Mr. Mohamed G. BAH

SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS	Mr. Gipu Felix GEORGE Mrs. Daisy BONA Mrs. Darcy SMITH Mrs. Sahr M'BAYA
SIERRA LEONE MUSICIANS' UNION	Mr. Aruna DEEM
SIERRA LEONE PALESTINE FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY	Mr. Abdul Rahman HAMID Mr. Mike A. BUTSCHER Mr. Al Hassan SILLAH Mr. Andy A. COLLIER Mr. Andrew COLLIER
SUPREME ISLAMIC COUNCIL	Mr. Achad Usman Nurudin SAHID JAH Mr. Achad Mohamed Foday KAMARA Mrs. Alari COLE Mr. Tejan Muniru SAVAGE Mr. Hassan Buyah D. KAMARA Sheikh Abu Bakar CONTEH Mr. Yakuba E.O. MUSTAPHA Mr. Awalu BELLO Mr. Ibrahim ISCANDRI Sheikh Abass CONTEH